



The UK Meeting Centres Support Programme Newsletter

Welcome to the June 2021 newsletter!

Despite the delay to ending lockdown, it's encouraging to see that the momentum around Meeting Centres has not abated. Leominster Meeting Centre has managed to remain open, Droitwich Spa is open again, and others have plans to open again in the next few weeks as (hopefully) start to return to normal.

The support provided to members and family carers during lockdown continues to be inspiring, and our recent article in Working with Older People* highlights the amount of work that's been going on and how everyone has benefitted.

There are also a number of new Meeting Centres coming on board, and it's been great to see how these have been welcomed into the Community of Learning and Practice – or the Meeting Centre 'family' as we like to think of it.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in Meeting Centres.

Director of the Association for Dementia Studies

* The article is titled 'How Meeting Centres continue to support people affected by dementia: report on UK COVID-19 impact' and you can read the abstract here

<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/WWOP-12-2020-0060/full/html>

Meeting Centre training

The first two cohorts of our online Meeting Centre training course have been completed, and we've had some good feedback so far. While the transition to online training was forced on us by the pandemic, we're actually really pleased at how it's going. We've had two great groups who engaged with our activities and shared their experiences over the five-week course.

We were also able to deliver the training to a cohort from Singapore, so it's going to be exciting to see how their Meeting Centres develop over time.

If you're a UK based Meeting Centre member of staff or volunteer we're running two further courses in August and November. Have a look at our website for more details on how you can attend for free.

New Meeting Centres

Funding from the Worcestershire Meeting Centres Community Support Programme is being put to good use, supporting five new Meeting Centres in Wichenford, Malvern Link, two parts of Worcester, and Evesham & District.

Two Meeting Centres will also be opening in North Tyneside, with plans also taking shape in Sandwell, Prestwick, Hereford and Liverpool to name a few!

Community of Learning and Practice – fortnightly meetings

Our fortnightly meetings have been continuing and provide a great opportunity for those with an interest in Meeting Centres to provide an update on progress and get advice from others in a similar position.

We've had some great discussions about various aspects of Meeting Centres and supported each other with some of the highs and lows of the past six months.

Hearing about plans for new and emerging Meeting Centres has also been brilliant. We've even had recent input from Singapore where two pilot Meeting Centres are up and running.



To continue the Community of Learning and Practice between these meetings, we've also developed a contact list and established a discussion forum on the Meeting Centre blog site (see link below).

This is a space where people involved in Meeting Centres can ask questions and share their thoughts at any time, so if you would like access to it please get in touch.

Goodbye & Hello

We would like to say a huge thank you to our own Mike Watts who has taken the decision to retire from the end of June. Mike has been an integral part of the UK Meeting Centres Support Programme and the previous MeetingDem project, going above and beyond his role as administrator. A former Trustee of Droitwich Spa Meeting Centre, Mike knows Meeting Centres inside out and will be greatly missed. We wish him all the best for his retirement.

We have however welcomed Nathan Stephens who began a PhD with us in February, looking at the impact of a strategic regional approach to scaling up Meeting Centres.

Get Real with Meeting Centres

A new 2-year project began earlier this year which will build on the SCI-Dem work to find out what helps Meeting Centres to succeed and what needs to be in place to sustain them over time. We'll give you more details in the next newsletter when we have more to report!

Monthly Webinars

From February 2021 we have been running a series of webinars focusing on different aspects of Meeting Centres as an alternative to a face-to-face conference. After a short Summer break, these will be restarting in September 2021 when we will be hearing from new Meeting Centres and those planning to get going. Please visit our website (see link below) for details of the webinars and how to register.

For further information and/or to contact us for support, please visit:

Web: <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/uk-meeting-centres-support-programme.html> and <https://www.worc.ac.uk/discover/meetingdem-jpnd.html>

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Blog: <https://meetingcentres.wordpress.com/> and useful resources <https://meetingcentres.wordpress.com/useful-resources/>

